United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General says it is "neither just nor practical" to continue humanitarian assistance to Iraq -- a country "capable of feeding its people and seeing that their needs are met".

- Secretary-General is "extremely concerned" at intensification of armed action in El Salvador.

- Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Yugoslavia meets with Italian President and other Government officials.

- Secretary-General stresses importance of International Court in statement in General Assembly.

- International Atomic Energy Agency to begin monitoring South African nuclear safeguards.

- Special Political Committee approves draft on outer space.

- Meeting of Anti-Apartheid Committee ends with adoption of two-track policy calling for both pressure and assistance.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has stated that in the light of the number of humanitarian crises demanding the urgent attention of the international community and the limited resources available to meet them, it is "neither just nor practical" to continue to request funding for humanitarian assistance to Iraq -- a country, which, he says, "was and is capable of feeding its people and seeing that their needs are met".

The statement is contained in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly of 4 November, on humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees and displaced persons, in which he also says that the Iraqi Government has yet to indicate its willingness to proceed with the sale of oil as authorized by

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the Security Council. By its resolution of 15 August, the Council gave Iraq permission to sell $1.6 billion worth of oil, roughly two-thirds of which would go towards meeting humanitarian aid requirements within the country.

The Secretary-General notes in the report that the agreement on the provision of humanitarian assistance signed between the United Nations and Iraq following the Gulf war is due for renegotiation in mid-December. Earlier this week, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said he had asked his Executive Delegate, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, to go to Iraq to make new assessments of the humanitarian situation in that country.

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A United Nations spokesman said today in a statement that the Secretary-General was "extremely concerned" at the intensification of armed action in El Salvador at a time when negotiations had entered a decisive phase "which should at last lead to a cease-fire". The situation was particularly difficult to reconcile with the repeatedly expressed desire of both parties to reach a cease-fire by Christmas.

According to the statement, the Secretary-General continued to believe that the reference point for cease-fire arrangements should be the situation existing on the ground on 4 April 1990, date of the signature of the Geneva Agreement. The United Nations had made this suggestion during negotiations last April, and it had been well received by both parties.

Therefore, the statement said, the current fighting would have no bearing on arrangements on the ground at cease-fire time. The combat, in the circumstances, was futile, and could only lead to more victims and destruction at a time when peace was clearly in sight.

The Secretary-General was convinced that a winding down of the war, which should emerge from mutual restraint, would greatly contribute to a favourable atmosphere for the negotiation, and broaden the growing consensus in El Salvador for a negotiated political solution, the spokesman said.

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A United Nations spokesman told correspondents today that the Secretary-General had received reports from his Personal Envoy, Mr. Cyrus Vance, on his mission in Europe. Mr. Vance had arrived in Rome yesterday from Vienna, and met today with the Italian President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He had also met with the Secretary of State of the Holy See and was now en route to Paris to meet this evening with the French Foreign Minister.

Tomorrow, Mr. Vance would meet with the French Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs and other Government officials. He was expected to return to New York over the weekend to report to the Secretary-General.

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The General Assembly today took up the annual report of the International Court of Justice, as well as the Secretary -General's report on the work of the Organization.

In a statement delivered this morning on the International Court, the Secretary-General made observations on the interplay of the six principal organs of the United Nations in the of peaceful settlements of international disputes and reviewed measures which, he said, "might lead to the strengthening of the complementarity" of their respective roles.

The Secretary-General proposed that in circumstances requiring a discreet procedure, as may be the case in instances when the Secretary-General is called upon to exercise "good offices as a mediator in a dispute", the Assembly could consider the possibility of authorizing the Secretary-General, with the consent of the parties to the dispute, to seek an Advisory Opinion from the Court.

The Assembly also discussed the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization in which he states that the challenges of recent years have answered two fundamental questions about the United Nations: "One, whether it could muster the power to repair breaches of the peace and reverse acts of aggression; two, whether the Secretariat would be able to execute the increasingly versatile projects of peace". He also observes that the effectiveness of the United Nations could no longer be in doubt.

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The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is currently reviewing the initial report by South Africa submitted in line with the Safeguards Agreement, which the Government of that country signed with the IAEA in Vienna on 16 September.

Under the Agreement, South Africa is required to submit an initial report to the IAEA listing all the nuclear material and nuclear activities within the country. Following that review, the Agency will begin inspections to verify the initial report. At the same time, the necessary negotiations with South Africa will be carried out in order to put in place the detailed subsidiary arrangements that are required by the Safeguards Agreement. Two negotiation teams will visit South Africa for this purpose by the end of the year, one dealing with conventional nuclear facilities and the other with enrichment facilities.

South Africa signed the Safeguards Agreement following its accession on 10 July to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

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The General Assembly would urgently recommend that all countries be given the opportunity to use the techniques resulting from medical studies in space, by the terms of a draft resolution approved this morning in the Special Political Committee.

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By the draft, which was approved without a vote, the Assembly would call for the continuation of national research on the problem of collisions with space debris and urge support for United Nations activities in connection with International Space Year 1992. It would also call for relevant activities in connection with the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

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The Special Committee against Apartheid concluded on Wednesday in Geneva a two-day meeting of consultations with representatives of non-governmental organizations and anti-apartheid movements.

Attended by representatives of 46 national and international organizations, representatives of United Nations agencies and other individuals, the meeting extensively discussed recent developments in South Africa and made decisions on present and future activities and the role of anti-apartheid movements in that country.

At the end of the deliberations, the participants adopted a statement of action which, among other things, welcomed the convening of the Conference of the Patriotic/United Front. The statement expressed support for the immediate holding of an All-Party Conference under the auspices of a neutral convener to decide on constitutional principles.

Participants also adopted a two-track policy, calling for both pressure and assistance. Regarding pressure, they called for the maintenance of economic sanctions in order to secure the establishment of an interim Government/Transitional Authority. Regarding assistance, the participants called for support to the national liberation movements, for the returning political exiles and the release of political prisoners.

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CORRECTION: In Press Release DH/1004 of (25 October 1991), the following sentence should be added to the third paragraph on Page 2: "The concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone as proposed by Israel these last 11 years is based on direct negotiations and includes mutually reassuring arrangements."